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Salmo cettii Rafinesque Schmaltz, 1810, an early name for the Sicilian Trout

Abstract - In 1810 C. S. Rafinesque validly described *Salmo cettii* as a new species, from Sicily, after the abbé Francesco Cetti, lombard explorer of Sardinia. The name *Salmo cettii* Rafinesque Schmaltz 1810 is therefore older than *Salar macrostigma* Duméril 1858, used by many authors for the freshwater populations of trouts from North Africa, peninsular Italy, Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Greece and Western Turkey. This priority should be considered, at least for the Sicilian taxon, in case of nomenclatorial discussion about this salmonid.

Riassunto: *Salmo cettii* Rafinesque Schmaltz, 1810, un nome più antico per la Trota di Sicilia.

Nel 1810 C. S. Rafinesque descriveva validamente *Salmo cettii* come specie nuova, propria della Sicilia, dedicandola all'abate Francesco Cetti, naturalista lombardo esploratore della Sardegna. Il nome *Salmo cettii* Rafinesque Schmaltz 1810 è dunque antecedente a *Salar macrostigma* Duméril 1858, usato da numerosi autori per le popolazioni di trote d'acqua dolce del Nord Africa, dell'Italia peninsulare, della Sicilia, Corsica, Sardegna, Grecia e Turchia occidentale. Tale priorità dovrebbe esser tenuta presente, almeno per il taxon di Sicilia, in sede di argomentazioni nomenclatoriali a proposito di questo salmonide.

Key-words: *Salmo [trutta] macrostigma*, *Salmo cettii*, nomenclature, trout, Sicily.

Impending a study on the biology and distribution of the Sicilian Trout, we believe it necessary to publish the present preliminary note on the correct scientific name of this taxon.

In December 1991, on the occasion of the IV Conference of the Italian Association of Freshwater Ichthyologists held at Riva del Garda (Trent, Italy), we stressed already this problem in a poster presentation; however, since the proceedings of the conference have not appeared so far, we feel desirable to clarify the nomenclature status of this fish as soon as possible.

A. Duméril described *Salar macrostigma* (= *Salmo [trutta] macrostigma* (Dum., 1858) in the sense of semispecies as proposed by Gandolfi & Zeru-

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nian, 1987) on two specimens collected from Oued- el-Abaich, Kabylia, Algeria (Duméril, 1958); since then, the same name has been applied to the freshwater trout populations of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Peninsular Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Greece and Western Turkey (Gandolfi et alii, 1991). However, almost fifty years earlier, the versatile scientist Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (1783-1840) published an account of his ichthyological discoveries, following a 10-years stay in Sicily (Rafinesque Schmaltz, 1810). In the "Indice d'Ittiologia siciliana", pages 32 and 55, he described *Salmo cettii*, the insular form of the trout from "some rivers in Val Demone and Val di Noto", naming it after the famous abbé Francesco Cetti, the 18th Century pioneer naturalist in Sardinia. The name bestowed by Rafinesque has been strangely overlooked so far by subsequent authors, but since the description is adequate and perfectly valid, we feel it is justified to resurrect *Salmo cettii*, in the combination *Salmo (trutta) cettii* Rafinesque Schmaltz, 1810, at least for the Sicilian taxon. This interesting fish is still present in the localities mentioned by Rafinesque Schmaltz (1810), i.e. the rivers of Val Demone, province of Messina, and of Val di Noto, province of Siracusa, although it is seriously endangered by poaching and by water pollution caused by the illegal discharge of sewage and olive husks from oil-mills directly into the streams.

No type specimens collected by Rafinesque survive in Italian Museums. Rafinesque's natural history collections and books were lost at sea in the shipwreck that occurred on the 2nd November 1815 at Race Rocks between Fisher Island and Long Island, when the author was emigrating to the United States. The "Indice d'Ittiologia siciliana" is a very rare publication in scientific libraries (there is, however, a facsimile edition published by Asher in 1967); we were able to examine an original copy of the book itself in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

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